

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY ATHENS IMMEDIATE

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S E C R E T STATE 138322

EXDIS, FOR THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, MASS, GR, TU

SUBJECT: U.S.-GREEK DEFENSE COOPERATION DISCUSSIONS

REF: (A) STATE 117166, (B) ATHENS 4847

1. STATE 117166 WAS INTENDED TO FACILITATE A SPEEDY CONCLUSION TO THE BASE TALKS IN A MANNER WHICH TAKES CARA-MANLIS' CONCERNS FULLY INTO ACCOUNT. IN LIGHT OF ATHENS 4847 AND SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENTS AND FURTHER DISCUSSIONS HERE IN WASHINGTON, WE AGREE THAT SOME MODIFICATION OF THE INSTRUCTIONS YOU HAVE IN HAND ARE JUSTIFIED.

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2. MOREOVER, THE PRESIDENT HAS NOW ACTED ON THE DEPT'S PROPOSALS RELATING TO THE AIRBORNE RECONNAISSANCE PACKAGE AND NEA MAKRI/DCS. SPECIFICALLY, HE HAS DIRECTED NSA TO REPROGRAM DOLS 5 MILLION IN 1978 FROM THE AIRBORNE INTELLIGENCE PACKAGE AND APPROVED AN INCREASE IN FMS FINANCING OF DOLS 20 MILLION AS PART OF THE DCA FOR POSSIBLE USE AS A

SWEETENER TO RESOLVE THE NEA MAKRI/DCS "COST GUARANTEE" ISSUE. IN DOING SO, THE PRESIDENT HAS EXPRESSLY INDICATED THAT DOLS 20 MILLION MAY BE OFFERED ONLY IF IT IS CERTAIN THAT THIS WILL CONCLUDE THE NEGOTIATIONS.

3. THESE DECISIONS ALLOW US TO PROCEED MORE PRECISELY WITH PLANNING FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF TALKS. THEY MAKE IT DIFFICULT, HOWEVER, TO ACCOMMODATE GREEK DESIRES TO MAINTAIN A CLOAK OF SECRECY OVER THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS THROUGH ITS CONCLUDING PHASE. WHILE WE APPRECIATE THE DIFFICULTY CARAMANLIS FACES IN TAKING THE POLITICAL DECISION TO ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLICLY THAT AN AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED, WE CANNOT ACCEPT CARAMANLIS' NOTION, AS MOST RECENTLY DESCRIBED IN ATHENS 5365, THAT THE NEGOTIATIONS CAN BE CONCLUDED IN SECRECY AND THE TIMING FOR PUBLIC DISCLOSURE OF AN AGREEMENT CAN BE LEFT FOR SOME UNSPECIFIED PERIOD IN THE FUTURE. INDEED, IT APPEARS MORE CLEAR THAN EVER FROM CARAMANLIS' LATEST COMMENTS THAT THE GREEKS ARE STILL UNCERTAIN AS TO HOW AND WHEN THEY WILL GO BEYOND THE TECHNICAL AGREEMENTS NOW UNDER NEGOTIATION AND TO TAKE THE POLITICAL DECISION TO ACKNOWLEDGE PUBLICLY THAT AN AGREEMENT HAS BEEN REACHED.

4. IN LIGHT OF CARAMANLIS' LATEST PRESENTATION (ATHENS 4847) AND BECAUSE OF THE PRESIDENT'S REQUIREMENT THAT THE DOLS 20 MILLION SWEETENER BE USED ONLY IF IT IS CERTAIN THIS WILL CONCLUDE THE TALKS, WE ARE CONVINCED THAT SOME FORM OF PRELIMINARY, UNPUBLICIZED, HIGHER-LEVEL DISCUSSION WITH THE GREEKS IS NECESSARY TO REVIEW THE VARIOUS
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STEPS REQUIRED TO CONCLUDE THE TALKS BEFORE TECHNICAL LEVEL DISCUSSIONS ARE RESOLVED. ACCORDINGLY, WE HAVE DEVELOPED SOME SUGGESTIONS WHICH BUILD ON INSTRUCTIONS PROVIDED IN REF A, BUT WHICH SEEK TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT THE RESERVATIONS EXPRESSED IN REF B.

5. THE INITIAL DISCUSSION WHICH SEEMS REQUIRED COULD PREFERABLY BE HANDLED DIRECTLY BY YOU WITH CARAMANLIS OR BITSIOS. IT COULD ALSO BE DISCUSSED THROUGH THE VISIT TO ATHENS OF SOME OFFICIAL FROM WASHINGTON, SUCH AS COUNSELOR NIMETZ, OR BY A VISIT TO WASHINGTON BY SOMEONE LIKE TZOUNIS. ALTERNATIVELY, WE WOULD ALSO BE OPEN TO SUCH A DISCUSSION IN EUROPE, IF IT WOULD EASE GREEK CONCERNS ABOUT HARMFUL PUBLICITY IN EITHER CAPITAL. IN ANY EVENT, SUCH A DISCUSSION WOULD BE DESIGNED TO OUTLINE TO THE GREEKS THE STEPS THAT WOULD SEEM APPROPRIATE TO CONCLUDE THE TALKS. WE WOULD INFORM THEM OF OUR BELIEF THAT THE THREE REMAINING ISSUES CAN BE SATISFACTORILY RESOLVED THROUGH CONTINUATION OF SMALL-GROUP, QUIET DISCUSSIONS IN

ATHENS. WE MIGHT INFORM THEM IN VERY GENERAL TERMS THAT WE HAVE NEW POSITIONS WHICH WE BELIEVE WILL MEET GREEK OBJECTIVES WITH RESPECT TO ALL THREE REMAINING ISSUES. DURING THESE DISCUSSIONS WE WOULD BE ABLE TO RECONFIRM OUR COMMITMENT ON THE AIRBORNE RECONNAISSANCE PACKAGE AND OUR

INTENTION TO PROVIDE AN EXIM LETTER WITHOUT GETTING INTO THE DETAILS OF THESE ISSUES. WE WOULD ALSO, AT THIS POINT, CONFIRM ACCEPTABILITY OF ANOTHER CONFIDENTIAL, TECHNICAL ROUND, BEGINNING JUNE 20 IF POSSIBLE, IF THAT IS WHAT THE GREEKS DESIRE, AND SEEK THEIR COMMITMENT TO A FORMAL, OPEN CONCLUDING ROUND, POINTING OUT, IF NECESSARY, THAT THE FORMAL CONCLUDING ROUND DOES NOT NECESSARILY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOW THE TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS. IF THE GREEK RESPONSE ON THIS POINT WAS POSITIVE WE COULD PROCEED WITH THE TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS. IF, HOWEVER, THE GREEKS BALD AT COMMITTING THEMSELVES TO AN OPEN, CONCLUDING ROUND, WE WOULD WANT TO
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EXAMINE OUR OPTIONS BEFORE PROCEEDING FURHTER.

6. THE CONFIDENTIAL, TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS -- USING THE PREVIOUSLY EMPLOYED SMALL-TEAM CONCEPT WOULD BE DESIGNED TO WORK OUT THE DETAILS OF THE AIRBORNE RECONNAISSANCE PACKAGE, THE PARITY QUESTION, NEA MAKRI/DCS, AND ANY OTHER LOOSE STRINGS. SUCH DISCUSSIONS COULD BEGIN ON JUNE 20, OR ANOTHER DATE CONVENIENT TO THE GREEKS. DURING THESE DISCUSSIONS WE COULD AGAIN ADDRESS THE QUESTION OF THE FORMAL CONCLUDING ROUND, WHICH NEED NOT NECESSARILY FOLLWO IMMEDIATELY ON THE HEELS OF THE CONFIDENTIAL, TECHNICAL DISCUSSIONS. WE WOULD EXPECT YOU TO TELL US WHEN AND IF THE POINT IS REACHED DURING THE TECHNICAL TALKS, WHEN WE NEED TO PUT ALL OR PART OF THE SWEETENER ON THE TABLE. HOWEVER, IN NO EVENT WOULD THE SWEETENER BE USED UNTIL AN AGREEMENT IS REACHED ON A PUBLIC ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AN AGREEMENT.

7. THE FORMAL, PUBLICLY ACKNOWLEDGED FINAL ROUND WOULD BE DEVOTED TO PUTTING THE FINAL TOUCHES ON THE DOCUMENTATION AND RESOLVING ANY OTHER LINGERING PROBLEMS. THIS SESSION, WHICH PRESUMABLY COULD BE RELATIVELY BRIEF, WOULD END WITH THE INITIALING OF THE COMPLETED DOCUMENTS. THE GREEKS, OF COURSE, WOULD BE UNDER NO OBLIGATION TO MOVE THE COMPLETED DOCUMENTS TO THEIR PARLIAMENT AT ANY SPECIFIC DATE.

8. SUCH A STEP-BY-STEP APPROACH STILL AFFORDS THE GREEKS THE ABILITY TO DICTATE THE TIMING OF THE FORMAL CONCLUSION, BUT WOULD DEPRIVE THEM OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO POCKET THE COMPLETED TEXT WHILE DEFERRING A PUBLIC ANNOUNCEMENT.

9. IF YOU CONCUR IN THIS APPROACH, YOU SHOULD CONFER WITH

THE GREEKS AT AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO PROPOSE THE HIGH-
LEVEL MEETING. IF YOU CONCLUDE THAT IT WOULD BE ADVISABLE
FOR AN OFFICIAL OTHER THAN YOURSELF TO PARTICIPATE, YOU CAN
PROPOSE THE ALTERNATIVES LISTED IN PARA 5. IF YOU DECIDE
THE APPROACH WOULD BE BEST CARRIED OUT BY YOU AND DO NOT
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BELIEVE YOU NEED ADDITIONAL TALKING POINTS OR GUIDANCE, YOU
SHOULD PROCEED AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. SHOULD YOU HAVE RESER-

VATIONS ON THE OVER-ALL PROPOSAL, WE WOULD WELCOME YOUR
THOUGHTS. IN CONSIDERING THIS APPROACH, CONSIDER PARTICU-
LARLY WHETHER IN YOUR OPINION THIS PRELIMINARY DISCUSSION
MIGHT DELAY THE NEGOTIATIONS OR WASTE OUR DIPLOMATIC CAPI-
TAL OR OTHERWISE ADVERSELY AFFECT THE NEGOTIATIONS. CHRISTOPHER

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